



Tiong first entered the industry at 16 through modelling. – **JOLENE TIONG**



Tiong posing for a picture after being crowned first runner up at Miss Astro Chinese International 2018. – **BRIAN LEE**



Tiong during one of her streams in which she baked. – **JOLENE TIONG**



Tiong considers herself a variety streamer. – **JOLENE TIONG**

The stream queen

Beauty pageant contender Jolene Tiong traded the spotlight for a ring light

BY **JOHN TAN**

BEAUTY pageants have long been a consistent component in the global culture ever since their inception in 1854. In fact, many young women and girls participate in beauty pageants annually to represent their community at large.

While some experts argue it to be sexist, others believe it to be a good avenue for girls to discover their inner beauty and self-confidence.

Regardless, beauty competitions serve as a good platform for contestants to advocate for important causes and to kick start their careers. The latter is especially true for the entertainment industry.

In fact, 2018 Miss Astro Chinese International first runner up Jolene Tiong is a prime example of someone who turned the attention she got from the competition into a lucrative career.

In an exclusive interview with *theSun*, the Sarawak native said: "I've always wanted to participate in Miss Universe and to represent Malaysia on a global stage. When I found out about the auditions for Miss Astro 2018, I was 19 years old and still midway through my degree programme.

"However, I thought it was a good opportunity to try out pageantry at an early age and so I auditioned for Miss Astro."

Organised by Astro Malaysia, the pageant is conducted entirely in Mandarin and Cantonese. Although Tiong did not speak either language, she saw it as a golden opportunity to be scouted by the channel for future opportunities.

"My agenda when auditioning was to get noticed by Astro and hopefully get roped into their English programmes as I did not believe I could get shortlisted due to the language barrier."

Despite not fulfilling the language criteria, Tiong managed to win over the audience and was crowned Miss Astro Chinese International first runner up.

Entering the world of streaming

Her win definitely was a victory as her hard work paid off. Aside from that, the participation also helped open up new doors for her. It

allowed her to pursue many of her interests within the entertainment industry. However, she was unhappy by the "inauthentic" nature of her fame.

"After being in the pageant, I felt very trapped and couldn't truly be myself on camera. As pageant girls, we were often told to be in a certain manner – elegant, composed and poised at all times and I lost my personality. I couldn't recognise who was the person I was looking at in the mirror and felt insecure and vulnerable."

Fortunately, she stumbled upon Twitch, an online streaming platform that allowed her to be comfortable in her skin once again.

"I saw live streaming on Twitch as an opportunity to create my own platform – one which I could be myself and not be constricted to any rules. I could combine my strengths and leverage on them by curating my own shows."

Current Twitch endeavours

But like any new journey, Tiong's transition into Twitch was no piece of cake! For instance, the streamer initially found streaming to be difficult and draining on her energy.

"To stream for at least three hours each time you're live on Twitch, especially when you're just starting out, was particularly exhausting."

She was so worn out from the pressure that she could not speak to anyone for the rest of the day following her

streams.

But after much practice, she adjusted to the standard and eventually developed her niche on the platform.

These days, you can find the 23-year-old streaming a variety of content on her profile. From entertainment to

lifestyle stories, her segments has not only solidified her presence but also done justice to her as an entertainer.

When asked about her favourite aspect of the job, Tiong contends it to be the relationships that she has built with her viewers.

"I enjoy the conversations and connections I've built with my viewers. I tend to have heart to heart conversations on stream and would have some meaningful conversations with the viewers on chat."

"I also have been organising meetups for the community and the people I've met are simply amazing to get to know. It's rather fascinating for me that I've built some valuable friendships via Twitch. It's really great to be in a community whereby both viewers and fellow streamers are so supportive of one another."

Lessons from beauty pageants

While Tiong is pleased to have discovered Twitch, she still holds her days as a beauty queen close to her heart. Indeed, she acknowledges the positive role it played in realising her current goals.

"My professional and pageant experience is one of the main reasons as to why I love being a twitch streamer. I'm able to incorporate the majority of my skill sets into one career – streaming. To be in front and behind the camera and to build my own community and brand has been extremely fulfilling."

Her future plans include pursuing a Masters degree. – **JOLENE TIONG**

